

465-000-300 CLIENT ACCESS TO CASE FILES

Upon request, the local office must make available to clients without charge the specific materials from their case files necessary for a household or its representative to determine whether a hearing should be requested.

The following is the procedure for clients to examine their case files.

- The participant or their representative must provide a written request signed by the individual who is the NFOCUS Program Case Name to examine materials contained in their case file.
- If another responsible household member other than the individual who is the N-FOCUS Program Case Name requests to examine material in their case file, the request must be made in writing. The request is evaluated for safety issues for all household members. This includes the possibility of a domestic violence situation. If there are no safety issues, case file material can be examined by any responsible household member upon receipt of a written request.
- The client declares if the request can be narrowed to a specific action or time frame.
- Prior to the release of material, all information in the case file is reviewed as to what is prohibited or confidential.
- Material includes electronic case file information.
- The case file material is made available to the client for inspection during normal work hours within five business days of receipt of the signed written request.
- The client may request photo/hard copies be mailed to them instead of physically appearing in the local office. If the client requests mailing of materials, the agency may restrict the material to a specific action taken by the agency or to a specific time frame. The mailing is made within five business days of the receipt of the written request.
- **Prohibited or confidential information is not released.** The following is a list of prohibited or confidential information:
 - Information from IEVS or DMV or other information provided to the DHHS through a contract with another agency. If information is verified through a contract with another agency, the client is told we have the information but hard copy verification of the information is not given to the client.
 - If the client wants a hard copy of the material, the client contacts the source of the information. Examples of information: birth records, divorce decrees, child support orders.
 - Investigative referrals or information obtained by investigative entities when the action resulting from the investigation is not yet decided.
 - Medical records. Information is not released regarding the content of medical records. The client is told we have the medical record but specifics are not released.
 - At the time of the case file examination, if the client wants a photocopy of the medical record, the client must contact the provider.
 - Note: When the client provides an original medical document to DHHS, it is photocopied and the photocopy is given to the client. The original medical record is filed in the case file.
 - Information from a collateral contact, including the source and identifying information. This includes information provided by a caller with a complaint or information provided by a third party.

- Information related to a third party including provider billings or payments. If the billing or payment material contains third party information, print the billing or payment, black out the confidential information and then make a photocopy of the billing or payment so as not to allow reading through the blacked out information.
 - Information on allegations or substantiation of abuse or neglect.
 - Adoption information. A biological parent cannot get future information on a child past the child's adoption date. An adoptive parent can get information on the child only prior to the child's adoption date.
 - Information that may be detrimental to the client, a household member or a third party for any reason, including due to a domestic violence situation.
- **If information is not prohibited or not confidential, it is released.** The following is a list of information to be released:
 - Applications.
 - Narratives. If the narrative contains confidential information, print the narrative, black out the confidential information and then make a photocopy of the narrative so as not to allow reading through the blacked out information.
 - Note: Type "CONFIDENTIAL" as the first word in a confidential narrative so it is easily identifiable.
 - Documentation or tracking sheets.
 - Budgets.
 - Notices.
 - Employment First assessments, employment plans, service plans, contracts, records of noncompliance, receipts for service authorizations. Including information stored in a contractor's file.
 - Statements waiving ADC, non-time-limited agreements, time-limited tracking sheets.
 - Information related to Work Requirements.
 - Child care or transportation authorizations.
 - Non-confidential or non-prohibited information or verification other than medical records.
 - Note: When the client provides an original document to the DHHS (birth record, marriage license, etc.), it is photocopied and the photocopy is filed in the case file. The original document is returned to the client and not retained in the case file.

The following describes the steps for a client to examine their case file.

- If the client and/or their representative comes to the local office:
 - The written request from the client to examine their case file is filed in the case file.
 - The SSW narrows the request to a specific action or time frame. The SSW removes non-prohibited and non-confidential information from the case file and hands the material to the client for examination. If the client wants a photocopy or hard copy, it is provided. The SSW returns the non-prohibited and non-confidential information to the case file.
 - The client may view electronic narratives, budgets and notices either on the computer or a hard copy can be made. If the client views electronic information on the computer and wants a hard copy, it is provided. Narratives are reviewed for prohibited or confidential information prior to the client's examination. If the narrative contains confidential information, print the narrative, black out the confidential information and then make a photocopy of the narrative so as not to allow reading through the blacked out information.
 - A narrative entry is created to note the date and name of the person examining the case file.
- If the client requests photo/hard copies be mailed to them instead of physically appearing in the local office:
 - The signed request from the client to examine their case file is filed in the case file. The request is narrowed to a specific action or time frame.
 - The SSW copies non-prohibited and non-confidential material from the case file and mails the material to the client.
 - Hard copies of electronic information from NFOCUS narratives, budgets and notices are included. Narratives are reviewed for prohibited or confidential information prior to printing. If the narrative contains confidential information, print the narrative, black out the confidential information and then make a photocopy of the narrative so as not to allow reading through the blacked out information.
 - A narrative entry is created to note the date, name of the person requesting the examination and that material specific to an action or time frame was mailed.

Any information provided by the client after the case file examination is acted on. Information may result in underpayments or overpayments.